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Letter to Roger J. Traynor Regarding the National News Council's Staff Selection

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The Bulletin

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THE BULLETIN

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ROBERT W. CHANDLER
EDITOR

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June 5, 1973

Justice Roger J. Traynor
[REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Dear Roger:

I have been asked to see if you would be willing to speak at the noon luncheon of the Oregon-Washington Associated Press members' annual meeting in Portland, October 26. I told the chairman of the meeting that I was not sanguine about the chances of getting you to travel this far for such an affair, but that I would be willing to act as his agent in delivering his request. The group would, of course, pay your expenses from Berkeley.

I have stayed out of National News Council business since announcement of the membership was made. That hasn't stopped various people from asking me for information, or making suggestions to me. In some of those cases I have not been able to help them. There is one recurring theme, however, which runs through some of my contacts, and I thought I should pass it on to you for your consideration.

As you know I was quite outspoken when the question of the Council's staff came up. I thought the selection of the staff was equally as important as selection of members of the Council. I think it is so important because those active in the news business think it holds the real key to the direction the Council takes. All of us have been active in organizations where the staff furnished

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the real, full-time thrust of the organization's work.

I also think the one crucial element in the Council's success or lack of success is the degree of cooperation it is able to obtain from the media. You know as well as I there is considerable opposition to the Council from within the news business. Some of that has been softened in recent days because of the legal problems of Otis (no relation) Chandler and Punch Sulzberger, but it still exists throughout the executive level of each organization with which the Council expects to deal. All of these people are watching carefully for the selection of the staff.

Such feelings are not confined to the executive level. The Nieman Fellows held their reunion at Harvard a few days ago. A friend who attended said the question of staff selection was raised several times there.

Newsmen, when it comes to judging their professional ethics or performance, have a deep mistrust of anyone who is not one of them. (They already are worried because of the shift of the membership of the Council, to give ~~non-newsmen~~ a majority.) They are not alone in this, of course. I have not been asked to serve on the Grievance Committee of the Oregon State Bar, or the Review Committee of the Oregon State Medical Society.

Newsmen have a very narrow view of the qualifications for membership in their profession. They do not admit to any expertise on the part of foundation types, political types, or political press agent, or political organizer types. Most newsmen, even in teevee, feel a solid background in newspaper news work on a strong newspaper is the key to professionalism. They are ready to accept strong experience on any of the major magazines. They do not accept most television experience, for even teevee people feel that is more often than not a part of show business, and not news business.

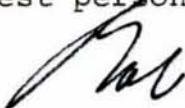
As you know, my three suggestions to the Founding Committee were Ed Murray, Bill Dickinson, and

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Bill Arthur. Murray and Dickinson would not allow themselves to be nominated. I sincerely hope Arthur remains in the running. I believe he is the best man you could get who would have much credibility among the working newsmen, who ultimately will be responsible for the success or failure of our experiment.

My young son and I are going fishing for a few days. If, late this month or during July you and Mrs. Traynor could manage to get away for a few days you ought to take a short trip up here. I will get Bill McAllister over for some relaxing time. We would enjoy that, and hope you would, too.

Best personal regards,



Robert W. Chandler

RWC:gm